

# SPEECH

OF

## T. L. CLINGMAN, OF NORTH CAROLINA,

IN

### DEFENCE OF THE SOUTH AGAINST THE AGGRESSIVE MOVEMENTS OF THE NORTH.

Delivered in the House of Representatives, January 22, 1850.

The House being in Committee of the Whole, on the State of the Union, Mr. BOYD, of Kentucky, in the chair.

MR. CLINGMAN said, that the committee was well aware that he had, on yesterday, intimated a purpose to discuss the questions involved in the propositions relating to the Mexican territory. That subject was regarded by the whole country as one of such immense importance that he offered no apology for debating it. To prevent misconception, (said he) I say in advance, that I have great confidence in the judgment, integrity, and patriotism of the President. I further admit fully the right of the citizens of each State, to settle for themselves all such domestic questions as that referred to in the message. But who are the people entitled so to decide, as well as the time and manner of admission and boundary of new States, are in themselves questions for the judgment of Congress under all the circumstances of each case. The territory of Louisiana, our first foreign acquisition, was retained nearly ten years in that condition before it was allowed to form a State constitution. In the case of Texas—her people being composed almost entirely of citizens of the United States, and having had a State government of their own for ten years—she was admitted at once as a State into the Union. In the present case, there are considerations of the greatest importance connected directly and indirectly with our action on this subject. While adverting to them, as fully as the time limited by our rules will admit, I ask the attention of the House.

With reference to this matter, I was placed at a disadvantage before the country by a publication made some time since. It is generally known that there was, on the Saturday evening before the time for the assembling of the House, a preliminary meeting or caucus of the Whig members. The proceedings of such meetings have usually been kept private. Contrary, however, to the former usage in this respect, some individual present furnished to one of the New York papers what purported to be a report of the proceedings. This report being in some respects authentic, was copied into other papers. The writer gave very fully the speeches of those persons whose views coincided with his own; but, though he made a reference to my position, he did not think proper to set out what I did say, so as to make that position at all understood. It will be remembered by those present on that occasion, that, at the very outset of my remarks, I stated that I had that morning had a very full and free conference with the gentleman from Georgia, [Mr. TOOMBS,] who had moved the resolution; that there was, in relation to the whole subject embraced in it, as well as with reference to the mode of action proper to be adopted by



the South, an entire agreement between that gentleman and myself. In fact, that there was not, as far as I knew, any difference of opinion between us, except as to the expediency of making the issue at that time, and that I thought it preferable to await legislative action and stand on the defensive purely. This, among other reasons then given, induced me to request the withdrawal of the resolution. It is proper that I should say that, in my interview that morning with the gentleman from Georgia, and with his colleague, [Mr. STEPHENS,] I gave my reasons at length, founded chiefly on my recent observation of the state of public sentiment in the North, for believing that a collision was inevitable, and that the sooner it came on the better for all parties; but that to enable us to make our demonstration in the most imposing and successful mode, it would be better to await the organization of the House. I expressed the fear that if we moved without the concurrence at the outset of a majority of the southern members, we might place ourselves at a disadvantage before the public, and prevent our uniting the whole South in such a course of action as it might be found expedient to adopt.

Looking over the whole ground, however, I am not at all dissatisfied with the course which things took. There has been no such division at the South as would be at all likely to impair efficient action hereafter. From the tone of the southern press, as well as from other indications, it is obvious that the South will, at an early day, be sufficiently united to insure the success of whatever measures it may be necessary to adopt to protect ourselves from the aggression menaced by the North. As to the election of a Speaker, in the present condition of the House and the country, I have never considered it of the slightest moment to either political party, or to either section of the Union. A Speaker without a majority of the House would be of no advantage to the Administration, nor could any mere arrangement of committees materially affect now the action on the slave question.

Those, Mr. Chairman, who have observed my course heretofore, know well that I have not sought to produce agitation on this subject. Six years ago, when I first took a seat on this floor, believing that the famous twenty-first rule had been gotten up merely as a fancy matter, which was productive only of ill feeling and irritation between different sections, I both voted and spoke against it, and was then regarded as responsible to a great extent for its defeat. I then stated, during the discussion, that if without cause we kept up a state of hostility between the North and the South, until a practical question arose like that presented when Missouri was admitted, (for I then saw the Texas annexation in the future,) the "greatest possible mischief might ensue." I went on also, in the course of my argument, to say that slavery could not be abolished in this District without a dissolution of the Union. Two years since, when it had become certain that we were at the close of the then existing war to obtain territory, I endeavored to place the question on grounds where the North might meet us; conceding, for the sake of argument, that the Government had complete jurisdiction over the territory. I endeavored to show, that while it might be justified in *dividing the territory*, it could not exclude us from the whole without a palpable violation of the Constitution. I am sorry to say, however, that my effort, though well meant, did not produce the slightest effect upon the *action* of any one gentleman of my own party from the North. On this side of the House, they regularly voted that the North should have the whole of the territory, and went against any compromise. I regret to be compelled to say, that instead of showing themselves in any respect conservative, as I used to consider them, the northern Whig members proved themselves, on this, the great question, eminently destructive.

To those gentlemen from the North, who aided us in an attempt to settle the question in some manner not disgraceful or destructive to us, I tender my thanks. In standing by the rights of the South, they have shown themselves friends of the Constitution and of the Union.



Sir, the force and extent of the present anti-slavery movement of the North is not understood by the South. Until within the last few months, I had supposed that even if California and New Mexico should come in as free States, the agitation would subside so as to produce no further action. A few months' travel in the interior of the North has changed my opinion. Such is now the condition of public sentiment there, that the making of the Mexican territory all free, in any mode, would be regarded as an anti-slavery triumph, and would accelerate the general movement against us. It is not difficult to perceive how that state of public sentiment has been produced there. The old abolition societies have done a good deal to poison the popular mind. By circulating an immense number of inflammatory pamphlets, filled with all manner of falsehood and calumny against the South, its institutions, and its men, because there was no contradiction in that quarter, they had created a high degree of prejudice against us. As soon as it became probable that there would be an acquisition of territory, the question at once became a great practical one, and the politicians immediately took the matter in hand. With a view at once of strengthening their position, they seized upon all this matter which the abolition societies (whose aid both parties courted in the struggle) had furnished from time to time, and diffused and strengthened it as much as possible, and thereby created an immense amount of hostility to southern institutions. Everything there contributes to this movement; candidates are brought out by the caucus system, and if they fail to take that sectional ground which is deemed strongest there, they are at once discarded. The mode of nominating candidates, as well as of conducting the canvass, is destructive of anything like independence in the representative. They do not, as gentlemen often do in the South and West, take ground against the popular clamor, and sustain themselves by direct appeals to the intelligence and reason of their constituents. Almost the whole of the northern press co-operated in the movement, with the exception of the New York Herald, (which, with its large circulation, published matter on both sides,) and a few other liberal papers, everything favorable to the South has been carefully excluded from the northern papers. By these combined efforts, a degree of feeling and prejudice has been gotten up against the South, which is most intense in all the interior.

I was surprised last winter to hear a northern Senator say, that in the town in which he lived it would excite great astonishment if it were known that a northern lady would, at the time of the meeting of the two Houses, walk up to the Capitol with a southern Senator; that they had been taught to consider southerners generally as being so coarse and ruffianly in manner that a lady would not trust herself in such a presence. This anecdote, sir, does not present too strong a picture of the condition of sentiment in portions of the interior of the northern country. How far gentlemen on this floor are to be influenced in their action by such a state of opinion, I leave them to decide.

The great principle upon which the northern movement rests, which is already adopted by most northern politicians, and to which they all seem likely to be driven by the force of the popular current there, if the question is unsettled till the next Congressional election, is this: That the Government of the United States must do nothing to sanction slavery; that it must therefore exclude it from the Territories; that it must abolish it in the District of Columbia, forts, and arsenals, and wherever it has jurisdiction. Some, too, carrying the principle to its extent, insist that the coasting slave trade, and that between the States, should also be abolished, and that slave labor should not be tolerated in a public office of the United States, such as custom-houses, post-offices, and the like. As these things all obviously rest on the same general dogma, it is clear that the yielding of one or more points would not check, but would merely accelerate, the general movement to the end of the series. Before this end was reached, they would probably append, as a corollary, the principle that the President should not appoint a slaveholder to office. It is, sir, my de-



liberate judgment that, in the present temper of the public mind at the North, if the territorial question remains open till the next election, few if any gentlemen will get here from the free States that are not pledged to the full extent of the abolition platform. It is, therefore, obviously the interest of all of us to settle this question at the present session.

That the general principle above stated is at war with the whole spirit of the Constitution of the United States, which sanctions slavery in several of its provisions, I need not argue here. Taking, however, a practical view of the matter in controversy, look for a moment at the territorial question, the great issue in the struggle. I will do northern gentlemen on this floor the justice to admit that they have argued themselves into the belief that they are right in claiming the whole of the territory for free soil. Let me state, for a moment, the converse, or opposite of their proposition. Suppose it were to be claimed that no one should be allowed to go into this public territory, unless he carried one or more slaves with him, it might then be said, just as gentlemen now tell us, that it would be perfectly fair, because it placed every man who might be inclined to go there on an equal footing, and might, by means of making thus a homogeneous population, advance the general interest. Northern men would at once, I suppose, object to this arrangement. Then we should say to them, if you do not like this restriction, let it be settled, then, that every citizen of the United States may go into the common territory and carry slaves or not, just as he pleases. This would seem to be a perfectly equitable and fair arrangement. Northern men, however, object to this, and say that they are not willing to live in a territory where others own slaves. Then we of the South say to them, that we will consent to divide the territory, and limit our possession with slaves to a part of it, and allow them to go at will over the whole. Even to this they object, and insist that they will not allow us to occupy one foot of the territory. Remember, sir, that this very territory was acquired by conquest, and that while the South, according to its population, would have been required to furnish only one-third of the troops, it in point of fact did furnish two-thirds of the men that made the conquest. And the North, deficient as it was comparatively in the struggle, now says that its conscience, or its cupidity, will not permit us to have the smallest portion of that territory. Why, sir, this is the most *impudent* proposition that was ever maintained by any respectable body of men.

Sir, I give the North full credit for its feelings in favor of liberty. I can well suppose that northern gentlemen would resist, in the most emphatic manner, the attempt to make any man who is now free a slave; but I regard them as too intelligent to believe that humanity, either to the slave or the master, requires that they should be pent up within a territory which, after a time, will be insufficient for their subsistence, and where they must perish from want, or from the collisions that would occur between the races. Nor can I suppose that they think it would be injurious to New Mexico and California for our people to go and settle among them. Prominent northern statesmen, both in this House and in the Senate, have described the population of those Territories, and have represented it as being not only inferior to those Indian tribes that we know most of, viz., the Cherokees and Choctaws, but as being far below the Flat Heads, Black Feet, and Snake Indians. I cannot, therefore, suppose that they really believe that those territories would be injured by having infused into them such a state of society as produces such persons as George Washington, John Marshall, and thousands of other great and virtuous men, living and dead. Your opposition to our right will be regarded as resting on the lust for political power of your politicians, or on the rapacity of your people.

The idea that the conquered people should be permitted to give law to the conquerors, is so preposterously absurd, that I do not intend to argue it. Doubtless these people would be willing, not only to exclude slaveholders, but all other Americans, if, by a simple vote, they were allowed to do so. I may remark further, that



but for the anti-slavery agitation, our southern slaveholders would have carried their negroes into the mines of California in such numbers, that I have no doubt but that the majority there would have made it a slaveholding State. We have been deprived of all chance of this by the northern movements, and by the action of this House, which has, by northern votes, repeatedly, from time to time, passed the Wilmot proviso, so as in effect to exclude our institutions, without the actual passage of a law for that purpose. It is a mere farce, therefore, without giving our people time to go into the country, if they desire to do so, to allow the individuals there, by a vote, to exclude a whole class of our citizens. This would imply that the territory belonged to the people there exclusively, and not to all the people of the United States.

Compared with this great question, the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia is of little relative moment. One effect, however, of the anti-slavery agitation here is worthy of a passing notice. Within the last two years, since the matter has become serious, it has seemed not improbable that the seat of Government might be removed from the District. As this would be extremely prejudicial to the interests of the citizens here, many of them have so far changed in their feelings as to be willing to allow slavery to be abolished, yielding to the force of the pressure from the North; besides, so many of their slaves are from time to time taken away by the abolitionists, as to satisfy them that such property here is almost worthless. A great impression was made on them by the coming in last year of a northern ship, and its carrying away seventy slaves at once. Seeing that there was no chance of getting Congress to pass any adequate law for their protection, as most of the States have done, they seem to be forced to assent to some extent to the northern movement. Sir, it is most surprising that the people of the southern States should have borne, with so little complaint, the loss of their slaves incurred by the action of the free States. The Constitution of the United States provided for the delivery of all such fugitives, and Congress passed an act to carry it into effect; but recently, most, if not all of the northern States, have completely defeated their provisions, by forbidding any one of their citizens to aid in the execution of the law, under the penalty of fine and imprisonment for as long a term usually as five years. There is probably no one legal mind in any one of the free States which can regard these laws as constitutional. For though the States are not bound to legislate affirmatively in support of the Constitution of the United States, yet it is clear that they have no right to pass laws to obstruct the execution of constitutional provisions. Private citizens are not usually bound to be active in execution of the law; but if two or more combine to prevent the execution of any law, they are subject to indictment for conspiracy in all countries where the common law doctrines prevail. If the several States could rightfully legislate to defeat the action of Congress, they might thereby completely nullify most of its laws. In this particular instance such has been the result; for, though the master is allowed to go and get his negro if he can; yet, in point of fact, it is well known that the free negroes, abolitionists, and other disorderly persons, acting under the countenance and authority of the State laws, are able usually to overpower the master and prevent his recapture.

The extent of the loss to the South may be understood from the fact, that the number of runaway slaves now in the North is stated as being thirty thousand; worth, at present prices, little short of fifteen millions of dollars. Suppose that amount of property was taken away from the North by the Southern States acting against the Constitution: what complaint would there not be; what memorials, remonstrances, and legislative resolutions would come down upon us? How would this Hall be filled with lobby members, coming here to press their claims upon Congress? Why, sir, many of the border counties in the slaveholding States have been obliged to give up their slaves almost entirely. It was stated in the newspapers the other day, that a few counties named, in Maryland, had, by the efforts of the abolitionists within six



months, upon computation, lost one hundred thousand dollars worth of slaves. A gentleman of the highest standing, from Delaware, assured me the other day that that little State lost, each year, at least that value of such property in the same way. A hundred thousand dollars is a heavy tax to be levied on a single congressional district by the abolitionists.

Suppose a proportional burden was inflicted on the northern States. How would Massachusetts bear the loss annually of one million one hundred thousand dollars, not only inflicted without law, but against an express provision of the Constitution? We may infer from the complaint she has made of a slight inconvenience imposed on her by that regulation of South Carolina which prevented ship-captains from carrying free negro servants to Charleston.

This whole action on the part of the North is not only in violation of the Constitution, but seems to be purely wanton, or originating in malice towards the South. It is obvious that they do not want our slaves among them; because they not only make no adequate provision for their comfort, but, in fact, in many of the States, have forbidden free negroes to come among them on pain of imprisonment, &c. It cannot be a desire to liberate slaves, because they have never, to my knowledge, attempted to steal negroes from Cuba or Brazil. It is true, however, that having the right now to come among us both by land and water, they have greater advantages and immunities. For if they went into a foreign country, they would incur the risk of being shot or hanged, as robbers and pirates usually are.

Sir, if any evils have grown out of the existence of slavery, they have not at least affected the North. During the days of the slave trade, which (as I formerly had occasion to remark) was continued down to 1808 by New England votes in the convention, the northern ship-owners realized large profits by purchasing negroes on the coast of Africa at thirty or forty dollars per head, and selling them to southern planters for several hundred dollars. The bringing in of these slaves caused large tracts of the southern country, too unhealthy to have been cleared by white men, to be brought under profitable cultivation. The price of cotton has thereby been brought down from fifty to ten and even five cents per pound. An immense amount of capital and labor is employed profitably in its manufacture at the North. In England, also, not less than six hundred millions of dollars is thus invested, and a vast population exists by being employed in the manufacture. It is ascertained that at least five millions of white persons, in Europe and this country, get their employment, are fed, and exist, on the manufacture of cotton alone. The cheap southern production of the raw material not only is the means of thus giving subsistence to a great portion of the population of this country and Europe, but is clothing the world at a cheap rate. In addition to cotton, rice, sugar, coffee, tobacco, and various tropical productions, are supplied at a cheap rate for northern consumption. On the other hand, our slaves seldom come in competition with northern labor, and are good consumers of its productions. While the North has derived these great advantages, the negroes themselves have not been sufferers. Their condition not only compares most advantageously with that of the laboring population of the world, but is in advance of the position they have been able, at any time, to occupy at home. The researches of Gliddon and other antiquarians, show that four thousand years ago in Africa they were slaves, and as black as they now are. Since then, in that country where they were placed by Providence, and where, from their peculiar constitution, they enjoy the best health, they have existed only as savages. They are there continually made slaves by the men of more intelligent and enterprising races. Nor have they ever gotten out of the tropical parts of Africa, except when they were carried as merchandise. It remains to be proved, however, yet to the world, that the negro, any more than the horse, can permanently exist, in a state of freedom, out of the tropical regions. Their decay at the North, as well as other circumstances which I have not time to detail, are adverse to the pro-



position. And yet, sir, the journals of the North, while they deny that the French and the Germans, the most enlightened of the continental nations of Europe, are capable of freedom, stoutly maintain that the negro is; the negro, who has never anywhere, when left to himself, gotten up to the respectable state of barbarism which all the other races have attained, not even excepting our Indians in Mexico and Peru.

While the people of the northern States and the negroes have been benefitted, I am not prepared to admit that the South (if injured at all) has suffered as generally supposed. The influx of foreign emigrants, and some other circumstances to which I will presently advert, have in some respects put the North greatly ahead. But if you deduct the foreign population which goes chiefly to the North—the little we get not being equal to that portion of our own people who go to the northwestern States; if you deduct this, I say, it will be found that the white population of all the slaveholding States has increased faster than that of the free States. Owing to the comfortable condition of our population, if there had been no emigration from abroad, the descendants of our portion of the American white family would be more numerous than the northern. Nor is it true that we are the poorer: on the contrary, if we are to take the valuations of property in the different States as assessed by the public officers, it appears that the slaveholding States are much richer in proportion to their population than the free. Even if you exclude the negroes as property, and count them in the population, it appears that the citizens of Virginia—the oldest of the slave States—are richer per head than the citizens of any one of the free States. It will also appear that the slaveholding States have vastly less pauperism and crime than the northern States. Looking, therefore, at all these different elements, viz., greater increase of population, more wealth, and less poverty and crime, we have reason to regard our people as prosperous and happy.

Sir, I have not, for want of time, gone into details on these points, but contented myself with the statement of those general views which every candid inquirer will, I am satisfied, find to be true. I do not seek to make comparisons that might be regarded as invidious, unless by way of defence against habitual attacks on us; but I regard it as right to say on this occasion, that whether considered with reference to the physical comfort of the people, or a high state of public and private morals, elevated sense of honor, and of all generous emotions, I have no reason to believe that a higher state of civilization either now exists elsewhere, or has existed at any time in the past, than is presented by the southern States of the Union.

When we look to foreign countries, these views are confirmed and sustained. Brazil, with a population of two slaves to one freeman, is the most prosperous of the South American States, and the only one which has a stable political system. Cuba is greatly in advance of the other West India islands, though St. Domingo and Jamaica once equalled her before the emancipation of their slaves. Besides the expense of maintaining her government at home, Cuba pays Spain a revenue of nearly fourteen millions. This is a greater sum for her population than two hundred millions would be for the United States. Could our people in addition to the expense of our State governments, pay six times as much as the Federal Government has ever yet raised by impost and taxes? That Cuba should be able to bear this burden and still prosper, is evidence of the high productiveness of the system.

In spite, however, of these great facts, which ought to strike all impartial minds, the course of the North has been constantly aggressive on this question. The ordinance of 1787, adopted contemporaneously with the Constitution, made the territory north of the Ohio free, and left that south of the river slaveholding, giving the North more than half of all the existing territory. When Louisiana was acquired, slavery could legally exist in every part of it. The State of Missouri having formed a republican constitution, proposed to come into the Union, but the North resisted her application. Though her constitution recognising slavery was precisely like those



of a majority of the old States, yet they, against all constitutional principle, because they had the power in one branch of Congress, obstinately refused her admission, until it was provided by act of Congress that no other slave State should exist north of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ . By that means, after leaving the South only territory for a single State, (Arkansas,) they acquired enough in extent to make ten or fifteen large States. Now, encouraged by their former success, and having become relatively stronger, they claim the whole of the territory,

Should we give way, what is to be the result? California, Oregon, New Mexico, Deseret, and Minnesota, will come into the Union in less than five years, giving the North a clear majority of ten or fifteen votes in the Senate. The census of the coming year will, under the new apportionment, give them nearly two to one in this House. With immense controlling majorities in both branches, will they not at once, by act of Congress, abolish slavery in the States? Mr. Adams, who, in his day, controlled northern opinion on this question, said that there were twenty provisions of the Constitution which, under certain circumstances, would give Congress the power. Would not this majority find the power, as easily as they have done in their State Legislatures, where they have complete sway, to nullify the provision of the Constitution for the protection of fugitive slaves? Have not prominent northern politicians, of the highest positions and the greatest influence, whose names are well known to all gentlemen on this floor, already declared that there is nothing in the Constitution of the United States which obstructs or ought to obstruct the abolition of slavery by Congress in the States? Supposing, however, this should not occur, in twenty years or less, without new acquisitions of territory, they would get the power, by the coming in of new free States, to amend the Constitution for that purpose. But I have no doubt, sir, that other acquisitions of territory will be made. Probably, after the next Presidential election we shall get that part of Mexico which lies along the Gulf, as far as Vera Cruz; and from which, though well suited to the profitable employment of slave labor, we should be excluded, nevertheless, by the adoption of the principle that slavery should not be extended in area. Conceding, however, that I am wrong in both these suppositions, and that Congress would neither violate the Constitution nor amend it thus: what are we to expect? Slavery is to be kept, they say, where it now is; and we are to be surrounded with free States. These States not only prohibit the introduction of slaves, but also of free negroes, into their borders. Of course the whole negro population is to be hereafter confined to the territory of the present fifteen slave States. That population in twenty-five years will amount to seven or eight millions, and in fifty years to fifteen millions. However dense the population might become, the negroes will not be gotten away, but the wealthier portion of the white population (I mean such as were able to emigrate) would leave the territory. The condition of the South would, for a time, be that of Ireland; and soon, by the destruction of the remnants of the white population, become that of St. Domingo. There are those now living who would probably see this state of things; but it would be certain to overtake our children or grandchildren. These facts are staring us in the face as distinctly as the sun in the heavens at noonday. Northern men not only admit it but, constantly, in their public speeches, avow it to be their purpose to produce this very state of things. If we express alarm at the prospect, they seek to amuse us with eulogies on the blessings of the Federal Union, and ask us to be still for a time. They do well, for it is true that communities have usually been destroyed by movements which, in the beginning, inflicted no immediate injury, and which were therefore acquiesced in till they had progressed too far to be resisted. They have, too, constant examples in the conduct of brute animals, that do not struggle against evils until they begin to feel pain. They are doubtless, also, encouraged to hope for our submission on account of our acquiescence under their former wrongs. They know that the evils already inflicted on us, to which I have referred, greatly exceed in amount



any injury that Great Britain attempted when she drove the colonies into resistance. Besides, sir, their aggressions have infinitely less show of constitutional right or color of natural justice. But what they now propose is too palpable even for our southern generosity. If after having been free for seventy years, the southern States were to consent to be thus degraded and enslaved, instead of the pity, they would meet the scorn and contempt of the universe. The *men* of this generation, who would be responsible, ought to be whipped through their fields by their own negroes. I thank God that there is no one in my district that I think so meanly of, as to believe that he would not readily come into whatever movement might be necessary for the protection of our rights and liberty. I tell northern gentlemen, who are in hopes that the South will be divided, that we shall not have half as many traitors to hang, as we did Tories in the Revolution.

If gentlemen mean that the Union, upon the principles of the Constitution, is desirable, I will not controvert that opinion. But the Union never could have been formed without the written Constitution. So, if you now, by your action, practically destroy the Constitution, those injured, if able to resist, will not submit. That instrument was ordained, in its own language, to "establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, and secure the blessings of liberty" to all parties to it—namely, the freemen of the Union. If, therefore, under its form, gross *injustice* is done, insurrections excited, and the citizens of part of the States politically enslaved, then the Union ought not to stand, as an instrument of wrong and oppression.

There is throughout the South a strong attachment to the Union of the States. This sentiment rests not so much upon any calculations of interest as on historic associations and the recollections of common ancestral struggles and triumphs. Our people take a pride in the name of the United States, and in being members of a great republic that furnishes a cheering example to the friends of liberty throughout the world. But the events of the last few years are rapidly weakening this feeling. Seeing that there appeared to be a settled purpose in the North to put them to the wall, many of our people, regarding a dissolution of the Union as the inevitable result of this aggression, have looked forward to the consequences of such a state of things.

I will tell northern gentlemen, in the hope that many of them are not yet past the point of reason, what is the view presented in prospect to many of the highest intellects in the South. It is well known that the existing revenue system operates hardly on the South and the West. The Government raises upwards of thirty millions annually by a duty or tax upon imports. But this system acts very unequally on the different sections of the country. For illustration of the mode of operation, I will take a single article. Railroad iron is produced in England at so cheap a rate, that it can be brought to this country and sold, we may say, for \$40 per ton.\* This is much cheaper than our people can afford to make it at. They therefore ask the Government to require the payment of \$20 per ton by way of duty. The importer, therefore, instead of selling for \$40 per ton, must ask \$60, to reimburse himself for what he has paid out abroad, and to the Government. Every person, therefore, in the United States, who purchases railroad iron, has to pay \$20 more for each ton. There are, however, some advantages to counterbalance this loss. In the first place, some of our people, finding that they can make a profit by selling railroad iron at \$60 per ton, engage in the manufacture, and thus find employment. While so engaged, these persons consume the produce of the farmers and others, and thus make a home market for agricultural productions. We see, however, that the loss

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\* It is stated in the proceedings of the convention of iron workers recently held in Albany, New York, that some of the English establishments deliver bar iron on tide water at a cost ranging from \$17 to \$20 per ton, or less than 1 cent per pound; Scotch pig iron they also say can be delivered in New York, duties off, at a cost not exceeding \$14 to \$16 per ton.



of \$20 per ton falls on all those in any part of the United States who may consume the iron. But the benefit is confined to those persons who are engaged in making iron, and those who live so near them that they can conveniently get their produce to the factories. In fact, this sort of manufacturing is confined to the State of Pennsylvania, and perhaps a few other localities. But my constituents can no more pay the manufacturers of Pennsylvania for iron in the production of their farms, than they could the British iron-masters. It is therefore to our advantage, as we must pay for it in cash, to get the iron at the lowest rate. This is true of the southern and western people generally. This illustrates the effect of our revenue and protective system. The burden is diffused over the whole country, but the benefit is limited to the manufacturers and to those persons who reside so near as to have thereby a better market; very little more than one-third of the Union gets the benefit of the system, in exclusion mainly of the South and West.

It is not easy to measure the precise extent of this burden. It has been estimated that two-thirds of all the articles which would, if imported, be subject to pay a duty, are produced in the United States. To return, for ready illustration, to the case of railroad iron. If two of every three tons of iron consumed in the United States were made in this country, it would follow that the person who consumed those three tons of iron, while he paid twenty dollars to the Government on the ton imported, would pay forty dollars to the home manufacturer; and if he lived so far from the manufacturer that he could not pay him in produce, it would follow that, in fact, while he paid the Government but twenty dollars, he would lose sixty himself on account of the duty. When, therefore, the Government gets, as it is doing, thirty-three millions of dollars revenue, the whole burden to the consumers of this country would be one hundred millions of dollars; of this amount the South pays, according to its population and consumption, forty millions of dollars. This sum I think too low in fact. In the Patent Office report, made to the last session of Congress, (the last one published, it is stated by the commissioner, Mr. Burke, a northern man, that the annual value of articles manufactured in the United States is five hundred and fifty millions of dollars. This statement does not include iron, salt, coal, sugar, wool, the products of fisheries, and other articles on which a duty is collected; adding these, swells the amount to nearly seven hundred millions. Our imports for that year were unusually large, on account of the famine abroad. Nevertheless, all the articles imported, on which a duty is collected, including the above omitted in the statement of manufactures, are in value only one hundred and eleven millions one hundred and fifty-four thousand three hundred and fifteen dollars. It thus appears that the amount manufactured in the country is more than six times that imported. It is not pretended, however, that this comparison affords a proper measure of the amount of the burden which the country may sustain; and that, while it pays to the Government thirty-three millions, it pays two hundred to the manufacturers indirectly, thereby making the whole loss to consumers, in the first instance, two hundred and thirty-three millions. Some few articles are manufactured here as cheaply as they can be elsewhere; and a very large number, at the places where they are made, are cheaper to the consumer than would be the foreign article when transported there. It is also true, however, that in a great many cases the consumer loses even more than the whole duty, because he is not only obliged to pay it to the manufacturer or refund it to the importer, but also a profit or per cent. on this duty to each trader through whose hands the article passes before it reaches him. In other instances, the price is intermediate between what it would be without any duty, and that which it would amount to by the addition of the duty. Want of accurate knowledge of all the facts renders it impossible to determine precisely the effect which our revenue system produces; but that it is most powerful and controlling cannot be denied. The Government actually raises more than thirty millions per year by these duties. The manufacturers, who certainly are interested in selling their productions at a high rather than a low rate, and who understand their true interests, attach the greatest



importance to the tariff system, and attribute to its operation effects even greater than I have stated them to be. There has been less complaint among consumers, because the cost of most manufactured articles has been diminishing from time to time. This fall of prices, however, is partly attributable to the great discoveries made during our day in chemistry, mechanism, and the arts generally, by which these articles are produced with much more facility. It is also attributable to the comparative repose of the world, which has directed capital and labor, formerly consumed in wars, to industrial pursuits. Hence, though there is a gradual reduction of prices in the United States, yet it is still more striking on the other side of the Atlantic. In Great Britain particularly, as well as in certain portions of the Continent, such is the accumulation of capital, and so great the number of laborers who are obliged to work for a mere subsistence, that prices are at the lowest possible rate. We have a right to take advantage of this state of things, just as the Europeans do of our cheap production of cotton. Instead of giving us half a dollar a pound, as they used to do, they, as well as the people of the northern States, seem glad to get it for five cents per pound, in consequence of our over production of the article. We have, therefore, a natural right to purchase their productions at the lowest rate at which we can obtain them, to counterbalance the disadvantage we suffer from the accumulation of a different kind of capital and labor. To alleviate this burden, we of the South get back very little in the form of protection. Why, then, have southern men been willing to submit to a system so unequal in its operation! Because, as I have formerly had occasion to state, in the Convention which made the Federal Constitution there was a bargain made between the North and the South, that, provided they would allow our slaves to be represented, to permit importation for a time, and to deliver up fugitives, the South would, on its part, agree that a *majority* of Congress might have power to pass navigation or tariff laws. As the gift of the power under the circumstances necessarily implied that it was to be exercised, we felt bound in honor to acquiesce in the action of the majority. Because, in the second place, protection to such extent as might give our infant manufactures a fair start, was calculated to advance the interest of the nation as a whole, though for the time it might bear hardly on us. And because, thirdly, we hoped that the southern States would after a time get to manufacturing themselves, as their interest required them to do, and thus escape the burden. It was thus that southern gentlemen, even after the North had partially failed to pay its share of the consideration, with great magnanimity continued to sustain the system.

The manner of disbursement is also adverse to our interests. Of the forty odd millions which the Government purposes to disburse this year, I do not believe that five millions will in any way be expended in all the slaveholding States. North Carolina, for example, is burdened to the extent of not less than four millions, and yet does not get back one hundred thousand dollars in any way from the Government. The clear loss, in a pecuniary point of view, on account of the action of the Government, may be set down at not less than three millions annually. The southern States generally are in the same situation.

What would be our condition if we separated from the North? It is difficult to determine the precise amount of the exports of the slaveholding States, because it is not practicable to arrive at the exact value of that portion which is sold to the free States. But the amount of our leading staples being pretty well known—I mean cotton, rice, tobacco, sugar, &c.—we can arrive at the whole value of our exports pretty nearly. They cannot fall short of one hundred and thirty millions of dollars, and this year, perhaps, considerably exceed that sum. This is nearly as much as the whole of the exports of the United States to foreign countries. It must be remembered, however, that though the free States furnish part of our exports, yet that which they do afford is scarcely so much as the portion of our own products which goes to them for consumption. If, therefore, we were separated, our whole exports



to the North and to foreign countries generally, would be equal to that sum. Of course we should import as much, and in fact do at this time consume as much. A duty of thirty per cent. on these imports (and most of the rates of the present tariff law are higher) would yield a revenue of nearly forty millions of dollars. As the prices of almost all manufactured articles are regulated by the production of the great workshops of Europe, where the accumulation of capital and labor keeps down production to the lowest possible rates, I have no doubt but that sum would be raised without any material increase of the prices which our citizens now pay. We might therefore expend as much as the Government of the United States ever did in time of peace, up to the beginning of General Jackson's administration, and still have on hand twenty-five millions of dollars to devote to the making railroads, opening our harbors and rivers, and for other domestic purposes. Or, by levying only a twenty per cent. duty, which the northern manufacturers found ruinous to them, as they said, under Mr. Clay's compromise bill, we should be able to raise some twenty-five millions of dollars. Half of this sum would be sufficient for the support of our army, navy, and civil government. The residue might be devoted to the making of all such improvements as we are now in want of, and especially chequering our country over with railroads. Subjecting the goods of the North to a duty, with those from other foreign countries, would at once give a powerful stimulus to our own manufactures. We have already sufficient capital for the purpose. But if needed, it would come in from abroad. English capitalists have filled Belgium with factories. Why did this occur? Simply because provisions were cheaper there and taxes lower than in England. The same motives would bring them into the southern country, since both the reasons assigned are much stronger in our case. It has already been proved that we can manufacture some kinds of goods more cheaply than the North. In New England, too, owing to her deficient agriculture, every thing is directed to manufacturing, and the system is strained up to a point which is attended with great social disadvantages, so as to retard population. In the South it need not be so. The climate and soil are very favorable to agricultural pursuits. Our slaves might be chiefly occupied on the farms, while the poorer class of our population, and a portion of our females, could be advantageously employed in manufacturing. We should thus have that diversity in our pursuits which is most conducive to the prosperity and happiness of a people.

Our carrying trade would probably for a time be in the hands of the English and other foreigners. This, however, would not be to our disadvantage, since northern shipowners now, by reason of the monopoly which the existing law gives them, charge as much for freight between New York and New Orleans as they do to Canton, on the opposite side of the globe. The whole amount of the freight on southern productions, received by the North has, on a minute calculation, been set down at forty millions one hundred and eighty-six thousand seven hundred and twenty-eight dollars, (\$40,186,728.) The whole value which the North derives from its southern connexion has been estimated, by some persons most familiar with these statistics, at more than eighty-eight millions of dollars. Whoever looks into the condition of the different States prior to the formation of the Union, and compares it with their situation at first, under low duties, up to the war and tariff of 1816, and its successors, highly protective as they have been, will find the facts fully sustaining the opinions I have expressed. Northern writers of elementary books, made for school-children, of course represent things differently, and deceive the careless and ignorant. My opinions on these points have been settled for a long while past, though I have not heretofore been in a position where I thought I could exert any controlling influence, or effect any desirable object, by giving utterance to them.

In throwing out these views, Mr. Chairman, I have not sought the utmost degree of precision, but I have no doubt but that all the facts will be found on examination not less favorable to my conclusions than I have stated them. My purpose now is simply to present to northern gentlemen such general views as are likely now to be



adopted by the South. Your course of aggression is already arraying against you all the highest minds of the South—men of high intellect, and higher patriotism, whose utter indifference to all personal considerations will make them, in the language of my eloquent friend from Georgia, (Mr. Toombs,) “devote all they have and all they are to this cause.”

But gentlemen speak of the difficulty of making the boundary; and the condition of the border States of Maryland and Kentucky are particularly referred to. Undoubtedly each State would have the right to determine for itself to which section of the Confederacy it would belong. If these two States were to unite with the North, then, as it would not be possible for them to change their condition immediately with respect to slavery, if they ever did, they would for many years, at least, form a barrier against the aggressions of the free States, until, in short, the South would have become too great and powerful to need such aid. I take it, however, that their interest would lead them to prefer an association with the South. With reference to fugitive slaves, Maryland would not be materially worse off than I have shown her to be, if she were not in fact less molested. There would, however, be some great countervailing advantages. She is in advance of most of the southern States in manufactures, and a duty on northern imports would give her for the time better prices on such things as now come from the North. Baltimore would, perhaps, from its considerable size and its capital, become the New York of the South. New York itself must at once lose more than half its foreign trade. Charleston and New Orleans would expand rapidly. The like might occur to the cities of Virginia. Even the little towns on the eastern coast of my own State would more than recover the trade which they had prior to the war duties and the tariff of 1816. The northern tier of counties in Kentucky would perhaps be obliged to remove their slaves to the South. But there would be to her advantages in the change, similar to those of Maryland. Kentucky supplies the South with live stock to a great extent; but she has to encounter the competition of Ohio and other northwestern States. If the productions of these States were subjected to a duty, she might for a time have a monopoly in the trade. I would do injustice to these two States if I supposed that they would be governed solely or even mainly by calculations of interest. Maryland and Kentucky are filled with as courageous, as generous, and as noble-minded men and women as exist on earth; and following their bold impulses, they would make common cause with their oppressed sisters of the South, and, if necessary, take their places where the blows might fall thickest, in the front of the column, with the same high feelings that animated their ancestors on the battle-fields of the Revolution. Rather than that they should separate from us, I think it far more probable that some of the northwestern free States would find it to their advantage to go with the South. But we have been threatened that the North will take possession of the Lower Mississippi. The British tried that in 1815, but found Andrew Jackson and some of the southwestern militiamen in the way. In the thirty-five years that have since passed, those States have become populous and strong, and would doubtless be able to protect their waters from aggression. The southern States having now a free population of six millions, and producing in succession such soldiers as Washington, Jackson, Scott, and Taylor, need have no serious fears of foreign aggression.

I submit it, then, Mr. Chairman, calmly to northern gentlemen, that they had better make up their minds to give us at once a fair settlement; not cheat us by a mere empty form, without reality, but give something substantial for the South. We might acquiesce in the Missouri compromise line. I should individually prefer, under all the circumstances, giving up the whole of California, provided we could have all on this side of it, up to about the parallel of  $40^{\circ}$ , not far from the northern line of the State of Missouri, rather than its southern— $36^{\circ} 30'$ . We would thus, by getting the whole of New Mexico, and having the mountain chain and desert on the west, obtain a proper frontier. We might then acquire, at some future day, whether united or divided, possession of the country along the Gulf of Mexico, well suited



to be occupied by our slave population. I mean, sir, that no restriction ought to be imposed by Congress on this territory, but that after it has been left open to all classes for a proper period, the majority may then, when they make a State constitution, determine for themselves whether they will permit slavery or not. The South will acquiesce in any reasonable settlement.

But when we ask for justice, and to be let alone, we are met by the senseless and insane cry of "Union, union!" Sir, I am disgusted with it. When it comes from northern gentlemen who are attacking us, it falls on my ears as it would do if a band of robbers had surrounded a dwelling, and when the inmates attempted to resist, the assailants should raise the shout of "Peace—union—harmony!" If they will do us *justice*, we do not need their lectures. As long as they refuse it, their declarations seem miserable, hypocritical cant. When these things come from southern men, I have even less respect for them. Even the most cowardly men, when threatened with personal injury, do not usually announce in advance that they mean to submit to all the chastisement which an adversary may choose to inflict. And those persons who, seeing the aggressive attitude of the North, and its numerical power, declare in advance that for their parts they intend to submit to whatever the majority may do, are taking the best course to aid our assailants, and need not wonder if the country regards them as enemies of the South.

If northern gentlemen will do us justice on this great question, we may consent to submit to lesser evils. We may acquiesce in a most oppressive revenue system. We may tolerate a most unequal distribution of the public expenditures. We may bear the loss of our fugitive slaves, incurred because the Legislatures of the northern States have nullified an essential provision of the Constitution, without which the Union could not have been formed, because mere pecuniary considerations are not controlling with us. We may even permit such portions of the northern people as are destitute of proper self-respect, to send up here occasionally representatives whose sole business seems to be to irritate as much as possible southern feeling, and pander to the prejudices of the worst part of the northern community. We may allow that the northern States shall keep up and foster in their bosoms abolition societies, whose main purpose is to scatter firebrands throughout the South, to incite servile insurrections, and stimulate, by licentious pictures, our negroes to invade the persons of our white women. But if, in addition to all these wrongs and insults, you intend to degrade and utterly ruin the South, *then we resist*. We do not love you, people of the North, well enough to become your *slaves*. God has given us the power and the will to resist. Our fathers acquired our liberty by the sword, and with it, at every hazard, we will maintain it. But before resorting to that instrument, I hold that all constitutional means should be exhausted. It is, sir, a wise provision of Providence that less force is required to resist an attack than to make it. The Constitution of the United States has been well framed on these principles. While, therefore, a majority is necessary to pass a measure, one-fifth of the members may demand the yeas and nays. In spite, therefore, of any change of rule which the majority can make, as long as this constitutional provision stands, a minority of one-fifth or more, if firm, and sustained by the people at home, can stop the wheels of the Government. If it is ascertained that no proper settlement can be gotten of the Territorial question, it would be in the power of the southern members to defeat all the appropriation bills, and bring the Government to a dead halt. Perhaps it might be well to give such a cup to northern gentlemen; for I well remember that when the civil and diplomatic appropriation bill was under consideration, with the amendment from the Senate known as Walker's, which would have settled the question of slavery in the Territories, a number of northern gentlemen resolved to defeat that bill and all other business by constantly calling for the yeas and nays, if they did not succeed in striking out that amendment. I recollect perfectly, that while I was pressing a Pennsylvania member to vote against striking out that amend-



ment, which was the pending motion, a member of high standing from Massachusetts said to me, "You need not give yourself any trouble about this matter ; if we do not succeed in changing it, we shall prevent its adoption by having the yeas and nays on motions to adjourn, and calls of the House, till the end of the session." From similar declarations made to me by a number of northern gentlemen, as I went through the House, I had no doubt but that, as he said, enough had agreed to have enabled them to effect their purpose, if the motion to change the character of the amendment had failed. It is not long since, too, that another citizen of Massachusetts (Mr. JOHN DAVIS) defeated the two million bill then pending in the Senate, by speaking till the end of the session. As northern gentlemen have therefore been accustomed to this mode of resistance to such measures as they do not like, I take it that they would hardly complain of this kind of retaliation.

I tell gentlemen that, if we cannot in advance get a fair settlement of this question, I should be pleased to see the civil and diplomatic bill, the army and navy bill, and all other appropriations, fail. We should thereby make every officer and every expectant of public money directly interested in having justice done to the South. It would be far better to have this temporary inconvenience for a year or two, than that we should see a bloody revolution, or something worse. I hold it to be the duty of every southern representative to stay here and prevent, till the close of our official term, the passage of any measures that might tend to force our people to unjust submission. In the mean time, the southern States could, in convention, take such steps as might be necessary to assert their right to a share in the public territory. If this interregnum were to continue long, it might drive both sections to make provisional governments, to become permanent ones in the end.

But it is advised, in certain portions of the northern press, that the members from that section ought to expel such as interrupt their proceedings. Let them try the experiment. I tell gentlemen, that this is our slaveholding territory. We do not intend to leave it. If they think they can remove us, it is a proper case for trial. In the present temper of the public mind, it is probable that a collision of the kind here might electrify the country, as did the little skirmish at Lexington the colonies in their then excited state. Such a struggle, whoever might prove the victors in it, would not leave here a quorum to do business. Gentlemen may call this *treason*—high treason—the highest treason ever known. But their words are idle. We shall defeat their movement against us. But even if I thought otherwise, I would still resist. Sooner than submit to what they propose, I would rather see the South, like Poland, under the iron heel of the conqueror. I would rather that she should find the fate of Hungary.

It was but the other day, and under our own eyes, that the gallant Hungarians asserted their independence. Though in the midst of, and struggling against those two immense empires, that could bring more than a million of armed men into the field, they were successful at first in beating down the power of Austria. It was not until some of her sons became *traitors* that Hungary was finally overpowered, borne down, and pressed to death by the long columns and gigantic strength of Russia. If necessary, let such be our fate.

"Better be  
Where the extinguished Spartans still are free,  
In their proud charnel of Thermopylæ."

Rather let the future traveller, as he passes over a blackened and desert waste, at least exclaim, "Here lived and died as noble a race as the sun ever shown upon." If we were to wait until your measures were consummated and your coil, like that of a great serpent, was completely around us, then we might be crushed. Seeing the danger, we have the wisdom and the courage to meet the attack now, while we have the power to resist. We must prove victors in this struggle. If we repel the



wave of aggression now, we shall have peace. The abolitionists defeated before the country on the main issue, will not have power to molest us.

I have thus, sir, frankly spoken my opinions on this great question, with no purpose to menace, but only to warn. Gentlemen of the North ought themselves to see that, while submission to what they propose would be ruinous to us, it would not in the end be beneficial to their section. Seeing, then, the issue in all its bearings, it is for them to decide. They hold in their hands the destiny of the existing Government. Should circumstances divide us, I wish that you may prosper. From all my knowledge of the elements of your society, I have doubts. That we shall, under the favor of Providence, in all events, take care of ourselves, I have no fears. In conclusion, I have to say, do us justice and we continue to stand with you; attempt to trample on us, and we part company.